





MAY 2015 NEWSPAPER



CITY COUNCIL MAKES HISTORY IN PASSING REPARATIONS LEGISLATION FOR BURGE TORTURE SURVIVORS!



Image by Monica Trinidad

Chicago, IL – This morning Chicago Police torture survivors and their family members attended a Chicago City Council hearing to witness passage of historic legislation providing reparations for the torture they and scores of other African American men and women survived at the hands of Chicago Police Commander Jon Burge and officers under his command. Some of the torture survivors and family members traveled from out of the City and State to attend the hearing.

The reparations package is the product of decades of organizing, litigation, and investigative journalism, and represents the culmination of an inspiring inter-generational and interracial campaign led by CTJM, Amnesty International, USA, Project NIA and We Charge Genocide, re-invigorated by the #BlackLivesMatter movement. Forty-six organizations endorsed the ordinance, the U.N. Committee Against Torture specifically called on the U.S. Government to support the passage of the legislation and scores of Chicagoans attended demonstrations, rallies, sing-ins and a Citywide Teach-ins over the last six months to urge Mayor Emanuel to support the reparations ordinance.

“Over the course of the past 6 months, a coalition of individuals and groups organized tirelessly to achieve this goal. Today’s historic achievement, passage of the reparations ordinance, is owed to the decades of organizing to bring some justice to the survivors of Burge and his fellow officers’ unconscionable torture. We have successfully organized to preserve the public memory of the atrocities experienced by over 110 black people at the hands of Chicago police torture because we refuse to let anyone in this city ever forget what happened here,” said Mariame Kaba, founder and executive director of Project NIA.

The reparations resolution represents the first time Chicago’s City Council has formally acknowledged and taken responsibility for the police torture that occurred in Chicago, and recognized its obligation to provide concrete redress to the survivors and family members. In addition to the establishment of a \$5.5 million Reparations Fund for Burge Torture Victims, the City will provide survivors and their families specialized counseling services at a center on the South side, free enrollment in City Colleges, and priority access to job training, housing and other city services. Additionally, a history lesson about the Burge torture cases will henceforth be taught in Chicago Public schools and a permanent public memorial will be erected to commemorate the torture and survivors.

“It is the first time that a municipality in the United States has ever offered reparations to those violated law enforcement officials,” said Joey Mogul, a co-founder of Chicago Torture Justice Memorials, partner at the People’s Law Office and drafter of the original reparations ordinance. “This holistic model should serve as a blueprint for how cities around the country, from Ferguson to Baltimore, can respond to systemic racist police brutality.”

The final legislation was the product of an agreement reached with Mayor Emanuel, CTJM and Amnesty International, USA on the eve of an April 14, 2015 hearing on the original reparations Ordinance introduced into City Council by Aldermen Proco Joe Moreno (1st Ward) and Howard Brookins (21st Ward) in October of 2013.

While torture survivors, family members, and activists were pleased with the reparations package passed today, they noted that much more work needs to be done to address racially motivated police violence in the City of Chicago.

“Today is an important and historic day, and the result of a courageous, decades-long effort to seek justice. But this is not the end. We must make sure that this curriculum places torture under Burge in a broader context of ongoing and endemic police violence. We must expand counseling and treatment services so they’re available for all survivors of police violence. And more broadly, we must fight for an end not only to these horrific acts of torture, and police shootings of Black youth, but also against the daily police harassment and profiling of young people of color in Chicago and across the country,” said Page May, an organizer and activist with We Charge Genocide.



The Reparations Ordinance was drafted to provide redress to approximately 120 African American men and women subjected to racially-motivated torture, including electric shock, mock executions, suffocation and beatings by now former Police Commander Jon Burge and his subordinates from 1972 through 1991. Although Burge was convicted on federal charges for perjury and obstruction of justice stemming from the torture cases in 2010, he continues to draw a taxpayer funded pension.

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Black and Pink
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SEND US YOUR ART!

This month’s header is by John in Indiana! Have your art featured in the Newspaper! We’ll feature a different artist each month! Send us a drawing that says, “Black & Pink” or “Black and Pink” or “Poetry from the Heart” for the headers! Header art should be around the size of the newspaper header! Smaller or larger images may be resized to fit. You can send us other art too and we will include it in the poetry page.

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Statement of Purpose
Black & Pink is an open family of LGBTQ
prisoners and “free world” allies who support
each other. Our work toward the abolition
of the prison industrial complex is rooted
in the experience of currently and formerly
incarcerated people. We are outraged by
the specific violence of the prison industrial
complex against LGBTQ people, and respond
through advocacy, education, direct service,
and organizing.

Black & Pink is proudly a family of people of all
races.

About this Newspaper
Since 2007, Black & Pink free world volunteers
have pulled together a monthly newspaper
primarily composed of material written by our
family’s incarcerated members. In response to
letters we receive, more prisoners receive the
newspaper each issue!
This month, the newspaper is being sent to
over: **7,544** prisoners!

Disclaimer:
Please note that the ideas and opinions expressed
in the Black & Pink Newspaper are solely those of
the authors and artists and do not necessarily reflect
the views of Black & Pink. Black & Pink makes no
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published in the Newspaper is also on the internet—
it can be seen by anyone with a computer. By
sending a letter to “Newspaper Submissions,” you
are agreeing to have your piece in the Newspaper
and on the internet. For this reason, we only
publish First Names and State Location to respect
people’s privacy. Pieces may be edited to fit our
anti-oppression values and based on our Editing
Guidelines

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS TO HOT
PINK!
Seeking erotic short stories, poems,
AND ART by Black & Pink incarcerated
and free-world family members for a
new ‘zine. To be mailed, art cannot
include full nudity. Please send
submissions (and shout outs to the
authors from the first issue mailed
in January!) addressed to Black &
Pink - HOT PINK. This is a voluntary
project, and no money will be offered
for submissions, but you might get the
chance to share your spicy story with
many others! The zine will be sent 1-2
times per year. To subscribe to receive
a copy of HOT PINK twice a year,
write to our address, Black & Pink -
GENERAL.

A MESSAGE FROM JASON

Dear friends,
I hope this note finds you as well as possible. I know
our May newspaper is getting out to you a bit late, sorry
about that. Know that even when we are slow we are
never forgetting about you. Did you know that Black
and Pink National Office receives over 200 letters each
week? Because we are a mostly volunteer organization
it takes us months to get to all of the mail. We are often
coming up with new ideas to get through the mail more
quickly, but it still takes a long time, unfortunately.
When you do not hear from us, please know it is not a
lack of solidarity.
May 15th was the anniversary of al-Nakba, the
Palestinian catastrophe. May 15th marks the day in
1948 that Zionist colonists established the state of Israel.
People within the United States who are organizing to
abolish the prison industrial complex align our struggle
with those in Palestine who are opposing the ongoing
colonization of their land by Israel. It is important that
we build these alliances internationally and across
struggles as it makes it clear that the liberation of one
oppressed people is tied to the liberation of all oppressed
people. I have a tattoo on my shoulder of birds flying
out of a broken prison window with the words under it,
“we will be free when all are free.” It is important for
Black and Pink that we understand how our struggles
are all connected.
Palestine has been referred to, by many activists and
scholars, as the worlds largest open air prison. There
are giant walls separating the occupied territories of the
West Bank and Gaza from the declared state of Israel.
This wall is called an “apartheid wall”. It is called such
because of the ways it has been used to steal land and
to keep Palestinians separated from access to resources.
There are countless check points that Palestinians have
to go through in order to travel across their own land.
They are forced out of their cars by Israeli soldiers and
are constantly harassed, even killed when they do not
follow orders of the occupying soldiers. As a prisoner
in the United States I imagine you can empathize with
those who are always being watched and controlled
by people with guns who threaten violence and
incarceration simply for exercising your human right
to live.
There is a large international effort led by Palestinian
civil society calling for Boycotts, Divestment, and
Sanctions of Israel and companies that profit from
the colonization of Palestine. This effort is called the
BDS Movement. Among the companies targeted by
the BDS Movement is Hewlett-Packard. This US
based company has been contracted by many agencies
profiting from Israeli occupation of Palestine, including
the Israeli prison authority. Similar to their efforts in
United States prisons and immigration detention
centers, HP is contracted to design and maintain
computer management systems to track prisoners. HP
is directly profiting, in the tens of millions of dollars,
from incarceration, whether that incarceration is in
Palestine or the United States. When our movements
align with one another we become stronger. When we
fight side by side we can take down companies like HP
who are benefiting from oppression.
As a family of LGBTQ people we have a particular
responsibility to challenge the myth of Israel as a safe
and justice focused place. The Israeli government puts
millions of dollars into campaigns to make it seem
like a wonderful gay friendly place. They release
advertisements online and even print major ads in
newspapers claiming that they are the only safe haven
for LGBTQ people in the Middle East. In reality they
use this myth to distract all of us from their human
rights abuses in Palestine. They claim to be a safe
space for queer people, but there is no rainbow door
in the apartheid wall that allows LGBTQ Palestinians
to have freedom of movement. The bombs Israel drops
on Gaza and the homes they destroy with bulldozers
are not making things safer for LGBTQ Palestinians.
I have heard prison administrators say that they create
safe prisons for LGBTQ prisoners, through policies
and safer housing situations, but that in no way ends
the real harm created by prisons. An LGBTQ prison is
still incarcerating people. We need to learn from our
Palestinian friends and challenge the idea that there can
be safe prisons. We need to connect our struggles for
collective liberation to put an end to all incarceration.

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We do our work knowing that once there were no
prisons, that day will come again.
In loving solidarity,
Jason

A DECADE OF BLACK AND PINK

Anyone who is being released between now and
September, PLEASE send us your outside contact
information. We are planning a big gathering in October
2015 to celebrate 10 years of Black and Pink. We will
be having a big party on Friday night and a weekend
long conference to plan the next steps for Black and
Pink. We will be able to pay for travel, housing, and
food of those who attend. We will also offer a stipend of
\$150 to formerly incarcerated people who attend.

BLACK AND PINK HOTLINE NUMBER!!!

After over a year of thinking about how to make this
happen we are now announcing that people can call
us. The phone number is **617.519.4387**. Your
calls will be answered as often as possible. We are
not currently able to set up accounts, so calls must be
either pre-paid or collect. The hotline will be available
Sundays 1-5pm (Eastern Time) for certain. You can call
at other times as well and we will do our best to answer
your calls.
The purpose of the hotline is for 3 primary things:
1. Story telling. We are trying to collect stories of
incarcerated members to turn into a recording that
we can play at our 10 year anniversary celebration in
October. Your voices are important to us and we want to
make sure they are part of this event. We want to make
time to record your story if you give us permission.

2. Supportive listening. Being in prison is lonely, as we
all know. The hotline is here for supportive listening so
you can just talk to someone about what is going on in
your life.

3. Organizing. If there are things going on at your prison
in terms of lock downs, guard harassment, resistance,
and anything else that should be shared with the public,
let us know so we can spread the word.
Restrictions:
The hotline is not a number to call about getting on the
pen pal list or to get the newspaper.
The hotline is not a number to call for sexual or erotic
chatting.
The hotline is not a number for getting help with your
current court case, we are not legal experts.

We look forward to hearing from you! This is our first
attempt at this so please be patient with us as we work
it all out. We will not be able to answer every call, but
we will do our best. **We apologize that our hotline is
currently only available to those who can make pre-
paid calls.** We will have the ability to accept collect
calls very soon, again, our apologies.

OUT IN THE NIGHT DOCUMENTARY

On June 22nd at 10:00pm (time may vary across the country,
check your local channel) PBS will be broadcasting a
documentary, Out In The Night, to kick off their summer
POV series. Out In The Night tracks the story of the New
Jersey 4 (Renata, Patreese, Venice, and Terrain), African-
American lesbians who were violently threatened by a man
on the streets of the Lower East Side of Manhattan. The
women fought back and were later charged with gang assault
and attempted murder. The tabloids quickly dubbed them a
gang of “Killer Lesbians” and a “Wolf Pack.” The award-
winning Out in the Night examines the sensational case
and the women’s uphill battle, revealing the role that race,
gender identity and sexuality play in our criminal justice
system. Black and Pink will be screening this film in October
with members of the New Jersey 4 as part of our weekend
celebration. We would love it if you are able to watch the film
to write some of your reflections - what did the documentary
make you feel, have you had similar experiences, as we
continue to fight against the prison system how do we make
sure Black women’s stories are included every step of the
way? If you do choose to do this please send responses to:
Black and Pink - OITN
614 Columbia Rd.
Dorchester, MA 02125

RAINBOW FORCE SOLDIERS AND WARRIORS:
THE WAR IS ON

The War is on between the LGBT people and "Ignorance, Violence, and Ostracism." What are you going to DO or CONTRIBUTE, so that we, the LGBT People, become Victorious? Or, are you going to let what happened to Gabriella Naverez, Aniya Parker, Islan Nettles, Penny Proud, Michelle Vash Payne, Ty Underwood, Lamia Beard, and countless of our fallen LGBT brothers and sisters "GO" and go about your business? The war is on and to continue and take no action is to accept defeat...

We are living in a White Supremacist System (W.S.S) and with "Internal Oppression" (within many black people). Within this White Supremacist System (W.S.S) are housing, employment, law enforcement, security, justice, equality, institutions, etc., etc., provided to them (W.S.S) and to us. This (W.S.S) police, govern, teach, and employ us. So, with this White Supremacists System (W.S.S) being hostile, hateful, and violent towards black, LGBT, and other citizens, what do we expect to happen when "they" (those who perpetuate this W.S.S) police us, govern us, teach us, and not employ us? What is going to happen is "they're" going to terrorize us, NOT just police us. "They're" going to create and pass laws to criminalize, suppress, and disqualify us (i.e., govern us). "They're" going to teach us, that we're inferior and they're superior, That our lifestyle is immoral, and that we're disenfranchised. "They're" going to employ us at the "bare-minimum" rate, only due to civil rights.

So let us not continue to be fooled and believe that this W.S.S will change. It (the W.S.S) is too deeply rooted. This W.S.S will never change, never!!! Let us remember the War Is On. The movement and war we must engage in is establishing our own system. Policing, governing, teaching, defending, and employing ourselves while simultaneously being within the fabric of American society. We must not support any business, media outlet, or policy that "FINANCE" and "PROMOTE" White Supremacy and that "FINANCE" and "PROMOTE" (directly or indirectly) "Anti-Black," "Anti-LGBT," "Mass Incarceration," and "Anti-Semitism." This in itself will make us victorious in this war. -- In regards to "Internal Oppression" (within many black people), this issue will be dealt with as well, when we police, govern, teach, defend, and employ ourselves.

This is what the "RAINBOW FORCE" movement is about. The soldiers and warriors of the RAINBOW FORCE are openly lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender. These are the tough-ass-wise people. These are people that exemplify that you can be like Hannibal Baca, Hercules, a Mixed Martial Artist, an Extreme Physical Athlete, Kings, Warriors, Soldiers, Street Smart, Alpha and Omega, yet still be Gay, Bisexual, or Transgender, and be respected and socially accepted.

The RAINBOW FORCE contribution to the gay Movement is about establishing, promoting, and maintaining a system (for us, by us) for all of us that is "Anti-White Supremacist." We are at war. Our (RAINBOW FORCE) warfare engagement is twofold:

1. Policing, governing, teaching, defending, and employing ourselves while simultaneously being within the fabric of American society.
2. Promoting the masses to ban, boycott, and never support "ANY" business, media outlet, or policy that "FINANCE" and "PROMOTE" White Supremacy and that "FINANCE" and "PROMOTE" (directly or indirectly) "Anti-Black," "Anti-LGBT," "Mass Incarceration," and "Anti-Semitism."

This is my (OUR) contribution, and action to this war. This is my response to those people that made us say, "Black Lives Matter" and "Black Trans Lives Matter." RAINBOW FORCE is a movement to establish respect as the platform to garner power in order for us to become Victorious. For this to happen, all of us that are incarcerated (and free) must get our minds, bodies, finances, and spirits right and strong. Mentally, we must be intellectuals. Physically, we must be fit and wise in combat (for self-defense only). Financially, we should be business oriented. Spiritually, we should be holistic. -- Organize, stand up, and never back down. Leave a legacy for the next LGBT(Q) to come. Establish respect... Get out of prison and join the Movement. Until then, keep the Movement alive in prison.

Strength is only in numbers, wisdom, and collaboration. The only way to win, is through building and maintaining a "collaborative force." "They" (the W.S.S) can beat on one of us, but they will fear the many that come together for a "common cause." We need all hands on deck. That means me, you, and all of us. Fight wisely and relentlessly, wherever you can...

REST IN POWER TO ALL MY FALLEN LGBTQ BROTHERS AND SISTERS!!!
Su'ganni, MA

Dear Black & Pink Family,

I am a 46 gay man. I am also a sex offender. I am doing 30 years for distribution of child porn via the internet. I am not proud of it. Just honest about it.

I have not been openly gay long. But finally being open about being gay. I felt a weight been lift off of me. My family still loves me and support me. Most people here in my facility have positive attitudes towards gays and transexuals.

There are still the negative jokes and attitudes. Most of the inmates and staff do not care. The handful of small minded people does make it hard. Being a gay sex offender, I learned along time ago to not give a crap what these small minded pigs think of me or who I am.

To all my sisters and brothers. I say be proud of who are!!! Tell the

world. I am proud of who I am!!! If the world don't like it. They can kiss our rear ends.

Prison life is hard. Being separated from family and friends is hard. Having a caring relationship in prison is hard. But so is life in general. We do survive it!!!

I see a sister or brother have a hard time with prison or life. I just stop her/him and say let's talk. My ears are made for listening. I'm here for you. This simple act can be a life saver. Not just for her or him, but for yourself too. Sisters, Brothers stop bitching and start helping fellow sisters and brothers. Especially to the sisters and brothers you don't like. Because we're a family.

My soap box has finally crushed under me. I not perfect by no means. I am just tired of the negativity. That I keep hearing from my sisters and brothers. Stand tall with your head up! Be proud! Save a life! It just might be yours.

Sincerely Your Loving Brother.
Mark, TX

YET AGAIN

At the time of this writing the notorious LAPD had killed another brother in downtown Los Angeles. Apparently this young man was an alleged robbery suspect and homeless man.

Though the local news did not show the actual shooting, as the story goes when the police approached the young man to supposedly question him he attempted to flee, and subsequently resisted being arrested, which led to a fight with police, which was caught on tape by one of the witnesses. The sound of the police tazer could be heard over the din of screaming voices in the melee, then five gun shots ring out, and there we are; another brother dead.

Though I am not a Los Angeles native, as an African American trans woman I have had my run-ins with the LAPD. So I am never surprised at any reaction or over reaction to what they do. I, in fact, have been stopped under the infamous "you fit the description" bullshit. I have also been stopped on more than one occasion for suspicion of prostitution. I in reality am a prostitute, however, (in point of fact) have only been arrested for prostitution once, since 1998. I have admittedly been very fortunate; but that's neither here nor there. Point is, there is a very serious problem with America's Law Enforcement agencies.

So the question is what are we gonna "ACTUALLY" do about this rise of cop killings. It seems to me that the police are being trained in extreme measures of harassment and homicide. Have we gotten to the point in America where we have entrusted our daily safety to a bunch of legal thugs and assassins?

What the hell is everybody marching for if no one is willing to go to war and walk to the revolutionary talk. It seems like the only blood being spilled in this revolution is that of the African American male. The only person being prosecuted for a hate crime in this country, is the gay or trans person who began as the victim. When does it all stop? When does a raised hand, turn into a raised fist? When do we start electing leaders that actually lead?

We, the GAY LESBIAN AND TRANSGENDER community, along with the various ethnic minorities in the nation are under attack, it's as if our differences have become a threat to those who feel as if the moral high ground they occupy is unimpeachable. How is that possible in a country that was built (allegedly) on the same principles of freedom that are constantly being attacked? Under the current circumstances the U.S. Constitution doesn't apply to us prisoners in the grip of the storm troopers and minorities. When does it all change?

Will I see another brother or gay or trans person brutalized on the news yet again.

Fatima, CA

Dear B&P and Family,

This is my first letter to you all and am a newly subscribed B&P member. An inmate I had befriended and who is part of the "community" had showed me the B&P newsletter and I was surprised that such material existed within the confines of prison and beyond. I'm a 25 year old gay man who has been through much emotional turmoil in my three years in this New York prison.

Recently more emotional stress has been put upon me when I was assaulted by a CO Sergeant when I told him I'd write him up because of his abusive derogatory language when I was trying to receive help from him for the misconduct of my dorm officer towards me. I suffered from a swollen shut black eye, a 1/2 inch gash that needed four stitches, and a fractured nose from the assault. I was subsequently charged with a Tier III ticket for assaulting staff, in which I had never touched the Sergeant. I'm now serving 6 months SHU time, and have also put in my appeal once I was found guilty.

I intend to bring a lawsuit against the State (for excessive force, as well as emotional and mental strain), and a Federal suit to sue the Sergeant and other COs who failed to stop his violent conduct in their individual capacity in a 1983 [Title 42 U.S. Code, § 1983 - Civil action for deprivation of rights). It isn't so much about the money, but to set an example to discourage the guards from such misconduct. Not only were my constitutional rights (8th amendment) violated, but my physical and spiritual being were violated.

Though, we all have to go through much stress and pain in prison, there is always some way to bring your individuality into light. If you are beaten down, don't become the system's pawn, but rise up and stand to fight what you believe is right. I have much to look forward to in life after my incarceration, such as my music (sing, guitar, bass, drums and *Cont on Page 4...*

*Cont from page 3...*trumpet), videography, architectural design, and many other free spirited adventures. I mention this because you have every right to be free of constraint and should never give up any aspirations and or goals you have in life. Be free and live free, but only for the betterment of yourself and others. Here is a quote from a Taoist:
“Failure is an opportunity. If you blame others, there is no end to blame. Fulfill your obligations, correct your mistakes. Do what you need to do and step away. Demand nothing and give all.” -Tao Te Ching.

To all my Wiccan brothers and sisters in the “community” and to those who aren’t, Blessed be and keep your head up and heart with love. I shall write plenty more in the future.
Amor mis hermanos y hermanas,
Wolfgang, NY

Dear Black & Pink Family,
My name is Charles and this is my first letter to our newspaper. I am 28 years old and have been incarcerated since 2007. Being bisexual is hard in prison and trying to keep it hidden is devastating. There are risks that all LG-BTQ people suffer and face, but there is no other way we want to be. We want to be who we are and do not want to hide, and we shouldn't. I am bisexual and proud of that.

Prison is not good for anyone, true; but it takes greater toll on us than many of those incarcerated choose to be aware of. An old saying is that “Who guards the guardians and who watches the watchers.” This came from an old Roman phrase that is translated from its Latin form. This is a major problem with the prison concept and its application: There is nobody watching those who hold the lives of the prisoners in their hands; no system of checks and balances.

I am a young man with an old soul and often portray a wisdom and maturity that is far above that degree shown by many people my age. Sadly, this tends to leave me isolated and lonely. In prison this is worse.

On top of being bisexual and convicted of an SO offense, I suffer from a developmental social disability known as Asperger’s Syndrome. It is part of what is referred as the autistic spectrum, however, it is not the same as being autistic. The major difference is that autism is a disability that has a very isolative and anti-social desire; whereas Asperger’s is a disability which displays “normal” or “higher” degrees of intellectual adeptness and a desire for social interaction. However, while Asperger’s patients crave social interaction, there are issues we face with interpretation of social cues. In my case, I have a “high function” Asperger’s diagnosis. I am highly intelligent, very inquisitive, and observationally astute. In prison the traits are dangerous to possess, because the staff really hate it when you maybe—or are—smarter than they are. Oops, can’t have that. Worse, however, is that I am also possessed of a tenacity and persistence that shames much else. When I latch onto an issue, I won’t stop until I am satisfied with the result.

These traits do not make me very well-liked. Indeed, they are very difficult for those who choose to be my enemies to overcome and accept. They also make me rather abrasive and irreverent. I love a good argument, but I dislike violence strongly. I avoid it if it is at all possible. That is not good in prison as people tend to think that you are a pushover if you exhibit control—particularly other inmates.

Prison is unfortunate and is a massive place of suffering and those who run these human sweat shops would rather view us as animals than as humans. In 7 plus years, I have learned that well. Psychologically, it makes it easier for them to disregard their harmful actions to see prisoners as lesser beings. I am big on the concept of analogy as it is very effective. In this case, go back to World War II and consider the racist slurs used by American GIs for the enemy. Japanese people were “Japs” or “Nips”; Germans were “Krauts”. American troops did this as a subconscious psychological defense in order to kill the enemy without feeling the natural distress of a human killing another human. The slur hid the fact that the enemy is just like you. Prison officials do the same: “Staff” and “Inmate”, “Prisoner”, “Convict”... sound familiar?
I have received the Black & Pink newsletter for about a year now and it is always a joy to read. It is comforting to know I am not alone in my suffering. I love all of you. Your strength gives me courage and hope to continue my battle for justice and to defeat the P.I.C.

Many letters I’ve read speak of torment, torture, harassment, and abuse at the hands of prison officials. I am no stranger to that! The problem that I see as the biggest obstacle is a lack of unity in the prisoners. Prisons exploit and encourage that. Prison is a microcosm of the “Class warfare” we see in the outside world macrocosm. Without division of people into gangs, clicks, and such garbage, prisons cease to be justifiable because the conflict does not exist. Prison amplifies this by placing large numbers of people in spaces of insufficient size with too little of every resource. This encourages competition for resources, which causes conflict and fighting. Such activity is how prison officials justify the abuses and deprivations they employ.
It is a self-perpetuating cycle and many prisoners blindly participate. They march to the trough, never aware of the slaughter that awaits them. It is so stupid that I would love to just scream: “YOU IDIOT’S. DON’T YOU REALIZE WHAT IS GOING ON!?!”

The problem is that it isn’t just us, LGBTQ family, that need to unite and face the P.I.C. and its cronies. We are strong, sure, but not THAT strong. We can’t fight this battle and win alone. We need allies. We need to unite not only the LGBTQ community, but all those who share the common ground of desire for change and dismantling the P. I. C. Common ground is what we need.

I love you all for giving me hope and strength. When I read what each of you contributes, I know I am not alone and I take heart from that. Brian, in Pennsylvania shot my heart out in the December 2014 paper. He stole the very words that I hold true. His letter is a light for me and proved to be the very support I need and still need now.
So, my family, keep your will strong. Never give up and never give in. Your hope is mine and my hope is yours. We are strong because of each of us, but we are stronger together.
We don’t have a local “chapter” of Black and Pink in Wyoming, but I got a card from Sage in Boise, Idaho. I am grateful for that. It was a great gift and I am grateful for your care Sage Raiden.
Keep strong my family.
Charles, WY

Dear Black & Pink,
I am new to the Black + Pink family. I am a 39 year old transgender woman. I am a girl trapped in a man's body. I have not had an easy time in the 7 years I have been incarcerated.
I have been raped twice. I was afraid to speak up at first but then I did. The system did nothing but move me to another unit, where it happened again. I have been open about who I am from the first day in the system. It is on my file that I am a girl. I am convinced by the actions of the system they don't care what happens to me. It has been 2 years since I was last raped. I have taken the power away from my rapist. I am proud to be the girl I am.
I want to encourage others to speak out against this injustice. You are not alone as I have come to realize. Take back the power given to these predators by not being afraid. We have to stick together to get changes made. You are a beautiful person and worth more than gold. Be proud of who you are. The Black and Pink newspaper has helped a lot. Thank you all. The unit I am on now is more accepting of me. They guys around me speak to me, and of me, as a girl. This has really helped me gain my self esteem back after the rape.
Keep up the fight Black and Pink family. I am. Change will come as long as we don't give up. Best wishes to all my brothers and sisters out there. Thank you again Black & Pink family for speaking out and being heard.
Love always,
Robin, TX

The Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction has recently started rigorous enforcement of the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA). This is a good idea, at least on paper, as it is meant to reduce the amount of sexual assaults in prison. However, prison staff and inmates themselves are using this zero tolerance standard to advance personal agendas.
Inmates are aware that they can easily manipulate the system by making a PREA compliant, oftentimes done anonymously. If an offender wants to have another offender moved to a different housing location in order to make room for his friend, or "homeboy" a PREA complaint accusing someone of a violation will accomplish this. If an inmate, or group of inmates, seeking revenge or retribution against another, PREA complaints of sexual misconduct are becoming the normal standard.
A small percentage of the prison religious activists (the hard core "bible thumpers") have adopted this method to declare an all out war on the gay, bisexual, and transgender community, targeting homosexuals, or anyone they perceive to be homosexual, or otherwise different than themselves.
When an anonymous "kite" is written, or a PREA complaint is received, prison staff respond with a knee-jerk reaction, often placing the accused in segregation, or at the very least, changing their housing assignment, placing the accused offender in the worst possible living conditions, removing them from a secure cell block and placing them in open dormitories, subjecting them to theft of personal property and additional violence.
It is also unfortunate that certain staff members are using the PREA doctrine in order to retaliate and attain retribution against inmates who have used the grievance procedure by filing informal complaints. Certain staff also use PREA against inmates that they simply do not like, or may have a particular distaste because of the nature of their crime. Whereas, inmates are being accused of PREA violations and punished based upon unsubstantiated allegations from an anonymous, or nonexistent source and without the benefit of any investigation, proper documentation, PREA risk assessment, or input from the Rules Infraction Board.
These types of situations are becoming epidemic [at this Ohio facility]. If left unchecked and unregulated, these incidents will spread throughout the statewide prison system. Therefore making the Prison Rape Elimination Act of little or no consequence, in much the same way as Megan's Law and the Sexual Predator Registry have lost their way. Prison staff and population will become more like the general public, not being able to differentiate between a serious threat or predator and someone convicted of indecent exposure for urinating in a back alley when walking home from a bar.
While consensual sexual conduct between inmates continues to be prohibited and considered as a serious rule violation, it cannot be grouped into the same category as PREA, as that was certainly not the intent of the legislation. Prison staff must be held accountable when determining the difference between a violent sexual assault, and someone masturbating in the shower.
Sincerely,
Michael, OH

Dear Black and Pink Family,
Hello once again. I would like to express my deepest thoughts and concerns to our brothers and sisters who contribute to the Black and Pink newspaper submissions thank all of you. I want to take the time to respond to three (3) of the submissions from the February 2015 newspaper. Which gave me much concern. First of all, I am in a Pennsylvania Institution, I claim to be transgender/gender identity disorder inmate. With that I've been in for over 23 years. I've been in eight (8) institutions in PA DOC so with that said:

Girl in PA congratulations on your success of gaining your treatment. Get used to the harassment by guards, staff, and inmates. Some PA institutions like us girls, some don't. Out of the eight (8) I've been to, three (3) may have accepted us in part. Your best bet is use the abuse hotline in the PA DOC handbook and do paperwork to all and any LGBT organization you can get, by writing in your complaint too. I've been doing it for years and they will back up once they see you're putting up a fight. Girl, it's a road I keep fighting.

Now California Girlie Girl; secondly, I must say thank you for my sister who outlined a great deal of the discriminatory and racist, protecting yourself and many other aspects of the prison system's rules. Yes, like myself being older I do hear "you don't look like a woman." It's crazy how they say that! But then they're sliding you a note under your door or when you're alone trying to get with you saying I'm on the DL (LOL). Psst write me a note. Then I show everybody, once they open their mouth again, in the yard, compound, etc. etc. Mmm. Also the issue on the "all the gender affirming things." Since 2011, I've been on this issue trying to get womens cosmetics as the women prisons have, bras, sports bras, etc. etc. Hearts On A Wire, an outside collective, has been campaigning to help us gain this but giiiiirl, to let you know I'm with you on that. It's a long road but we keep going. Surely eventually that is coming. Because more and more of us are coming into the penal system and something has to give. Baby girl, you're intelligent and an inspiration to all of us. Thank you so much.

Now to the Arizona man, thirdly: I am very saddened by how the Arizona DOC's protection policy is. [...] I'm sorry you and many others go through such abuse. We have it bad in PA, but nothing like that of Arizona. I hope someone out there, helped you in some way or another. No matter who you were before that. No one deserves to be treated in that way. I will pray for you, and all who endure such mental and physical abuse.

Some advice for everyone, this is what I do: I write to 10-20 different organizations (either LGBT or equal rights organizations), who document my complaint. Then I write the DOC stating that I wrote to the 10-20 organizations and let them know my complaint and that if anything happens to me, they will be at fault and responsible. Trust me, it works. But everybody should always note abuse is abuse. Report it! If that doesn't work, file a civil complaint and note that on your grievance or request slips to the warden/superintendent or DOC. You'll see how fast they react. New laws for LGBTQ are coming forth. Right now, no one wants that wrath because we are getting stronger... With that said I'd like to say Happy Birthday to my baby boy I love you. Wink, wink!

<3,
Miley, PA
Ed note: removed comparison between AZ prisons to “Third World” prisons. Calling other countries “third world” assumes that the US is automatically better, but it isn’t. And although prison conditions vary a lot, prisons are horrible everywhere!

Hello my dear loved ones.

My name is Huneey. AHHH my poem made it in our newspaper I'm so happy and excited. I wish someone would try to tell me I'm not C.S. Lewis, Frederick Douglass or some damn body because my Black and Pink family said so! Okay I'm done.

I've been watching every one of my beautiful Queens, my gay men and lez-be-honest my gorgeous women. I want everyone to know regardless we don't have to know one another personally to give support, love and to be cared about. None of us are alone especially with our Black and Pink family going out their way to bring us together (Thank you Black and Pink staff and volunteers). The transformation in our newspaper is marvelous. I just want everyone to know that everyone has my gratitude for being yourselves. No matter what we have done in our past God has our lives mapped out and what doors he open none shall close.

I'm in a Texas Prison, the worst one possible (if that's possible) and recently my wife Renee was split up. We came from "society" together and still going strong 6 yrs into eternity. To everyone who has been split up if y’all love is as strong as your determination, when there's a will you make a way, feel me? I'm not implying to buck the system because it won't budge, but failure is never final with love. I'm saying all this to say my wife and I caught our charge together, reunited and was split up again, so I know every couples fear and struggle in here (prison) but like Tupac said "keep ya head up," and if you don't stand for something, you've already fell for any and everything. Just sayin. And when you don't fail (at times) it means you aren't trying. Life is lived in the moments between success and failure. A little more might get us there, but a little less just means we keep trying again, and again, and again. And even when our success is called failure from the beginning, we never give up. After all, it just might be a mix-up in names. Those words brought me encouragement & I hope it does the same to y’all especially to my wife. My love I'm in love w/you, need you & I'll wait & stay pure & not drop my heart in the game, TNT forever & eternity. And if anyone in a Texas Prison know any information on getting us approved to write, lace me up. Also to everyone with a 3G (aggravated charge)

in Texas know what’s up w/Rick Perry no good ass and us doing 60% of our time lace me up.

Now to the family, I love yall so much and when we submit things it might not make it when we want it to but it's a waiting process and you'll still be overjoyed. Forever in love. Love,
Huneey, TX

Dear Black & Pink family,
This is my first letter to the family, I have been bi for many years, my name is Fish. I’m in a facility in Texas, and it is very tough to endure. I get ridiculed every day, I have tried to take my life several times, depression sucks, but these scars tell a story and I know for a fact I will survive my 50 yr sentence. No I’m not a Christian, I’m satanic which means that I believe in self preservation, I don’t hate everyone or anyone like that. I used to be a heterosexual but I can tell you exactly how society looks at us: they hate us. They see it as, a man and a man do not make life, but a man and a woman make life. So in their eyes it makes sense, but you are you; if you want to have intercourse with a man then do it.

No one can tell you what to do, I love having intercourse with men and women I don’t care what people think. This is my life, I do what I want period, you do the same. Just be careful, people will play the role of your best friend, next thing you know someone stabs you in the back. Life in the penitentiary is hell but as long as I get this newspaper I am good. Big shout out to the family on the outside - they sent me cards when no one else did. Thank you and to everyone’s story in the newspaper, that’s motivation for all of us. Please keep your head up chest out.

Love & Respect,
Fish, TX

BEYOND THE LOOKING GLASS

Sometimes our regrets seem to smother us, the emotional baggage it causes weighing down our shoulders until it takes every ounce of energy & strength to take that next step forward. We dwell on questions like “what if” and “why didn’t I,” even though they’re impossible to answer, and only poison our ambition & spirit.

Late at night when I’m left to ponder where my life has come to, and surrounded by a deafening silence, I am haunted by everything I could have done differently. Memories of what appear to be “better” days play in slow motion across my solitary mind... along with the faces of everyone who has cared about and/or impacted my life in one way or another. For a long time I allowed myself to become obsessed with those reflections of a life that is now only memories, and I cried and mourned those memories; allowing myself to “fall into the looking-glass” and be driven mad by “what if’s” and “could have been’s.” What I failed to see though in those images was the promise of the future, and opportunity; you see the looking-glass is the most deceitful object in our heart & soul, ***the looking-glass does nothing but lie***. Its point of being is to show us what we missed out on, to second guess ourselves, and to degrade our hope for the future; it does this by playing on repeat the moments in our lives that make us want to go back in time and relive it either to change it or because we feel life was never better. What doesn’t show is what led to that great moment, or how that mistake impacted us and/or made us into a stronger person... we are blind to the cracks in the mirror that are meant to remind us that a perfect life is meaningless, and a damaged or “thread-bare” life is the developer of compassion, empathy, courage, and strength.

Coming to prison was the lowest point in my life and left me feeling empty and a disgraceful failure; it made me ask where I took the wrong turn. Two years and 6 months later I now know that I NEVER took the wrong turn but rather chose to walk my life’s path with my eyes closed, and caused myself to stumble, fall, and land in a deep pit because I never saw the bridge that would have taken me to the other side safely. So as I begin my journey as a recently “out” transgendered woman; and learn to allow myself to live and allow the true me, Jakaelynn [Editor’s Note: for confidentiality, we do not publish full names], to shine through; I’ve put that looking glass on the curb so it could never smother me again. The past is great, & many say “if you don’t know history, you’re doomed to repeat it,” but it has no place in our future... we must be courageous enough to see beyond that looking-glass to what opportunities lie ahead of us. Because sometimes our greatest failures are what become our greatest successes that set us free! Prison has become a reality check, and literally saved my life... from alcohol and drug abuse (as “self-medication”) to the dangerously promiscuous life I was living. Am I saying that I’m glad to have ended up here? Absolutely, not! But what I do know is that it took my hitting rock-bottom to be able to get back to the surface to breathe, and to finally see that life is too short and unpredictable to not live it true.

So I beg you, shatter your looking-glass and set yourself free of the bindings of the past! No matter what you could have done differently you are blessed with unfathomable opportunity ahead of you that you’ll NEVER see if you stay locked in your room staring into a mirror of memory that will NEVER change. Life is not easy or clean, and we are all bound to have regrets; but in the end those regrets and messy moments make life the unique and enjoyable place it is, because if you didn’t know regret and failure we’d never know joy and success!

#SRLP, #Hope&Faith, #LookingGlass, #BeingTrue2U!
Fight for love and life!
Jakaelynn, NY

WHO I AM

Who I am, as I stand
Regardless of your likes and dislikes,
I refuse to be chastised or judged,
By any man!!!!

Who I am, I will ever be,
you can laugh, talk all you want,
I'm not in a closet, not ashamed or afraid,
To simply be me!!!!

Who I am, I'm someone real,
I have a name, can even shed tears,
I'm flesh and blood, I'm not a number,
I'm human just like KeKe, Chyna Baby, Tiffany Marie,
Patrice, Jermaine, Jazzie Farrari, and even Wanda!!!

Who I am, I'm as you see
I'm you, you me, he she, she he, they we
Black and Pink, unashamed and free, LGBT,
I am love, I am hope, I am humbled,
I am God, I am strong, I am never weak,
Who am I? I am, SOLIDARITY!!!!

Special dedication
to my friend
Jerusha

Nuubyyah, AR

ENOUGH!

They want freedom of religion, is what they claim
But it's just legalized bigotry with a prettier name
"We abhor your lifestyle," they chant and scream
"We don't want your business," is their common theme
The sad part is, they are afraid of our kind,
not willing to consider changing their mind
"The good book says," is another line I hear
"It's against God's laws," they're all about fear
Love is love, I say, condemn me not
Who amongst you "thumpers" wanna take the first shot?
Your good book says "Judge not, lest ye be judged"
But you don't care, you hate us, you won't be budged
"Beauty is in the eye of the beholder," I've heard say
Love is "creation in harmony," be it straight or gay
"Those without sin, cast the first stone"
Is a lesson that should be taught in every home
Stop and think... How'd you like it if we did it to you?
Taught our children to hate you all through and through?
There's enough hatred in the world, let's stop it now!
Put an end to the ignorance and bigotry, let's take a vow!
That no one has the right to tell us how or who to worship or love
Let us all get along like a hand in a glove!

Samantha, AZ

THOUGHTS IN THE NIGHT

While lying here in my cell tonight
Unable to sleep my mind runs right
I review my memories from the past
and wonder why time goes so fast
I remember the day when I was a child
Just a carefree kid out running wild
My thoughts of the future often shattered
by things in the present that didn't matter
As I grew older my ways were the same
the idea of life was only a game
So to win, I cheated, instead I lost
as a loser that's why I'm paying the cost
As I ponder this thought in the night
I begin to see my past wasn't right
I wish for a future that I hope will be
a way of life to keep me free

Josh, OR

MY ENERGY

Alone in this world,
I am facing defeat.
Don't call me your "girl",
You cannot make me complete.
Desperate for someone to love, but unable to love myself,
I pray to Miss Universe to explain the intricate concept of self.

Lost and confused, I keep running away,
But this tsunami of pain in my heart, I cannot escape.
If you want my heart there is a price you must pay,
I no longer do drugs, they do me and it's rape!
Riding on a dark cloud all alone,
Seeking comfort and joy I decide to get stoned.

I want to play outside when the rain starts to pour
And let it absolve me of my many sins
I promise to change after I get drunk just this once more
Don't bother challenging me, my indomitable ego must win!
Join me in my delusions and allow me to be
Content in a sphere of mendacity.

If tomorrow I die in this atmosphere of terror and hate,
Could I say I had ever been truly free?
Time burns like kindling and I fear it may be too late.
The smoke to the Earth is my energy...
If the fire in me dies, let my scent still live on,
Do not forget me when I'm dead and gone.

Corbett, MI

HAPPINESS

Exploring the depths,
of what lies inside,
finding the thing,
no one else can provide.

Fulfilling my dreams,
obtaining my goals,
writing my stories,
from no one else can they be told.

Living how I please,
Leaving regards for none,
no standard do I fall under,
nor stereotype, not one.

Roads paved before me,
choosing to make my own,
showing future generations,
not to aimlessly roam.

Focused on a means,
A career, not a delusion,
by which in time will be,
My ultimate conclusion.

Nahbeel, PA

RELIGIOUS SUBMISSIONS WANTED

Black and Pink is compiling a zine about prison, faith, and sexuality.
Please submit your neatly written submission of 3 or fewer pages to:
Black and Pink - The Spirit Inside
614 Columbia Road
Dorchester MA 02125
Drawings also welcomed.

We would like your help in putting together a zine (miniature magazine) or resource guide about religion and spirituality for and by LGBTQ+ people behind bars. We'd like to request written homily, reflection, teaching, drawing, poem, or other resource for people behind bars.

With your submission about faith and prison or sexuality, please include the name of your religion/faith/spirituality (Example: Christianity, Paganism, Judaism) and your sect or denomination (Example: Baptist, none, Reform)

We welcome anything in your own words, but for space and variety, not all submissions can be accepted. By submitting, you give Black an Pink permission to publish your writing in print and on the Internet.

What in the world am I to do?;
This feeling is something new;
It burns, yet I want more;
Chills that permeate my inner core;
A love so powerful it freezes my brain;
Joy so intense I'm driven insane;
Every aspect of you I see;
Is the true meaning of beauty;
Substances I've used have gotten me high;
But the level of affection I get from you makes me wonder
why?;
However we interact I feel complete;
Nothing from you involves deceit;
When we touch I feel the level of power;
Sensations so strong they last over an hour;
Don't get me started on the love that's made!;
So much pleasure, it never seems to fade;
Oh baby, it's true through and through;
I'm addicted to you.

Luke, TX

LOST AND FOUND

Where do I start when it comes to me? Do I go back to when I was 3? And that's when I was touched and told shhh it's only a dream.

So where do I start when it comes to me? DO I look back to when I was 13? And that's when I fell in love with my best friend Lee, you see he was not like me so he told me we could never be.

So where do I start when it comes to me? Let me jump ahead to when I was 18 and that's when he came at me, we fought to the point where I almost killed thee, now I'm all drugged up out of control living in Kansas running from this madness you see I stabbed him repeatedly cause he wanted to end me for being me.

So where do I start when it comes to me? Let me start with a needle that set me free, free from this life of misery. Who will love me? His name was Nick so I thought cause he told me now look I'm here in DOC while he's free, free to spread his NTD that's "Needle Transmitted Disease."

So when do I start to love me. Today is my day a day to be free, free from all the lies I through into me but I won't forget how I became this man a man whose past would scare thee but no not me cause I'm free! No more lies no more cries no more hiding and telling alibis cause I'm free. It's time to stand strong and know that you are you and I am me and this is how God intended me to be!

Joshua, CO

My days they aren't the same
it's hit and miss my heart's in pain
It feels so wrong that I've gone insane
but still it's just one day

It used to be eyes to the soul
our secret glances that we store
a whisper here and handshake there
still I longed for your beautiful stare

Our lives are so mismatched
I feel like a bandaid or an eye patch
My heart sank that day you said hello
That day my heart had been snatched

Each day we miss each other
Each day we compete for time
Those days not long ago so sublime
And when I think of you I sigh

Still my days just aren't the same
it's nobody's fault nobody to blame
our plans are still on I can't deny
you're the joy in my life the apple of my eye

Zachary, ID

DEFINING NORMAL

You're not like me
You're different
There's a name for people like you
A derogatory name
A label to put you in your place
Where you belong.

I know the power of labels
Of being called names
I've bought into the power given to them
I've believed I was less
You'll see
You've got not choice
You're different

This name I've chosen
Will cause you pain
You deserve it
Because you're not like me
It doesn't matter if you think you're a good person
That's just a lie to make yourself feel better
Your kind can't be good
Because your kind is different
I have a name for your kind
A label that fits you
An ugly label
But that's what being different gets you
It's nothing less than you deserve

If you were more like me, you could be my friend
But you're not
So don't get your hopes up
You'll never be good enough to join my group
If I do let you join, it's because I feel sorry for you
Don't let it go to your head
You really don't belong
You never will.

I still hear your kind throwing names at me
Trying to bring me back down to your level
It's not going to happen
I'm not listening to you anymore
I'm not the one that's different
I'm normal
There's absolutely nothing wrong with me
If you weren't so different, you'd know that.
But you are different.
And I've got a name for you.
You're going to hate it.
But I don't care.
It's what you are.
This word, this label, will mark you forever.
It will become what defines you.

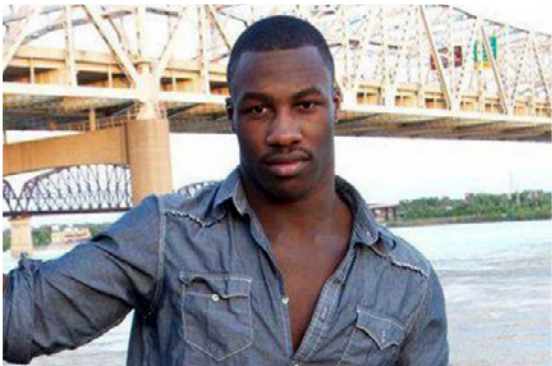
Then you'll know.
Then you'll know the power that words have.
You'll be an outcast.
Feared and hated.
Because you're one of them. I'm going to like giving you this label.
It suits you.
Because you're different.

Every time you hear this word,
You'll know it's you they're talking about.
Live with it.
You're labeled.
You're no longer equal.
You're different.
Not like me.
At all.

From now on, I'm going to call you...
A Human.
Just like me. I'm normal.
My normal is just different from your normal.

Allan, NM

MICHAEL JOHNSON FACES LIFE IN PRISON FOR HIV TRANSMISSION, AND WE NEED TO PAY ATTENTION



A photo of Michael Johnson

Michael Johnson, a 23-year-old former Lindenwood University wrestler, made national headlines last year after being arrested in Missouri and charged on several counts of infecting and exposing partners with HIV. Johnson was found guilty of all charges Thursday, according to BuzzFeed, and now faces up to life imprisonment. The jury will decide his sentence Friday.

Missouri requires those who are HIV positive to disclose their status to their sexual partner. After three days of testimony, a nearly all-white jury convicted Johnson on one count of recklessly infecting a partner with HIV, one count of attempting to recklessly infect a partner with HIV and three counts of recklessly exposing partners to HIV.

Despite the news, Johnson's case has only intensified a burgeoning fight against the criminalization of HIV. Activists view this fight as both an LGBT rights



Stephen Houldsworth
@sfhouldsworth

Follow

#michaeljohnson conviction: racism, homophobia, HIV stigma, sex shaming, and medical misinformaton combined.
12:26 AM - 15 May 2015

9 4

Image of a Tweet

issue and another aspect of the national movement for black lives, given that HIV disproportionately impacts black gay and bisexual men.

"Michael is loved and supported. I, along with others, will engage the LGBT/ SGL (same gender loving) communities to advocate for change in these laws on both the state and federal levels," Akil Patterson, Johnson's friend and an LGBT sports advocate, told Mic.

Johnson's case also illuminates yet another route to imprisonment through which black people will likely be disproportionately shuttled.



Blaqueer
@Blaqueer

Follow

I wish #MichaelJohnson's life was a black life that mattered to others #BlackLivesMatter
11:12 PM - 14 May 2015

5 5

Image of a Tweet

"What happened to Michael Johnson is a call to action. HIV criminalization is anti-black violence, period," Charles Stephens, director of the Counter Narrative Project, which gives a voice to black gay men, told Mic.

"You can't be against the Prison Industrial Complex without being against HIV criminalization. You can't ignore the fact that the communities most vulnerable to HIV are also the communities most vulnerable to criminalization. We must fight the clinic-to-prison pipeline."

Black people in the U.S. already make up nearly 1 million of the 2.3 million incarcerated individuals in the U.S. and are incarcerated at nearly six times the rate of white people, according to the NAACP. Moreover, black Americans, followed by Hispanics, lead in HIV infections in the U.S., which means that it is highly likely people of color will be those impacted most by a growing set of HIV criminalization laws across the country.

One group of black gay men, organized by the Counter Narrative Project, is fighting to ensure those who march under the banner #BlackLivesMatter also insist that the lives of HIV positive black people, especially black gay men, matter as well.

In a letter to be released Friday and made available to Mic via email, the group made clear that Johnson's case deserves public outcry because it has the potential set a precedent for over-criminalizing black gay or bisexual men who are HIV positive. "Far too many young black gay men receive an HIV diagnosis in this country, and nearly 1 in 3 can expect to in their lifetimes. And Missouri's solution, to a problem they helped create, is prison," the group wrote in the letter.

"Michael Johnson is a part of our community and he is not disposable," the letter states. We can begin to end the stigmatization of HIV positive people by treating the virus as a public health concern rather than a punishable social problem.

By Darnell L. Moore originally published on Mic May 15, 2015

LGBT & HIV ADVOCATES WELCOME RECOMMENDATIONS OF OBAMA POLICING TASK FORCE

Following the release of the Interim Report of President Obama's Task Force on 21st Century Policing, LGBT and HIV advocacy organizations who presented testimony to the Task Force issued a joint statement:

The recommendations made by the Task Force to the President represent an important first step toward addressing the epidemic of police violence and widespread and pervasive discriminatory policing practices across the country. While much more remains to be done, we urge the Administration to adopt the recommendations of the Task Force in full and move swiftly toward effective implementation.

Recognizing that LGBTQ people are also members of communities of color, low income communities, and immigrant communities who are all too often targets of excessive and deadly force, racial profiling, and other forms of discriminatory policing, we welcome the Task Force's recommendations calling for the creation of a national Crime and Justice Task Force to examine comprehensive criminal justice reform, development of strong policies governing the use of force and mandating independent prosecutors in cases of death in custody, an end to involvement of local law enforcement in enforcement of federal immigration laws, regulation of consent searches, development, in collaboration with communities, of policies with strong privacy protections and evaluation procedures for the use of body worn cameras and other technologies, and policies aimed at stemming the school to prison pipeline.

We are particularly supportive of the report's recommendations, consistent with those made in submissions to the Task Force endorsed by over 45 LGBTQ organizations, encouraging local police departments to:

- adopt comprehensive policies banning police profiling, including profiling based on sexual orientation and gender identity and possession of condoms as evidence of intent to engage in prostitution-related offenses,
- develop policies with respect to interactions, arrest processing, searches and housing of LGBT people, and
- ensure effective policies to address sexual harassment and assault of members of the public by police officers.

We urge the Department of Justice to work with LGBTQ organizations who have successfully advocated for effective policies at the local level to move swiftly to issue model standards and training in each of these critical areas so they can be adopted by local law enforcement agencies.

Consistent with the Task Force's recommendations, we also call on the Administration to condition federal funding on adoption and enforcement of these important benchmarks of nondiscriminatory and constitutional policing.

Recognizing that LGBTQ people of color experience both similar forms of racial profiling as other members of communities of color as well as gender and sexuality specific forms of discriminatory policing, we also call on Congress to pass a comprehensive End Racial Profiling Act which would ban profiling based on actual or perceived race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, gender, gender identity, and sexual orientation as a means of implementing the Task Force's recommendations with respect to profiling policies.

Using condoms as evidence of criminal conduct further exposes communities that have historically been both hard-hit by HIV and subjected to intense police profiling. The practice of citing possession or presence of condoms as evidence of intent to engage in prostitution-related offenses disproportionately affects women of color, and particularly transgender women of color, as well as LG-BTQ youth of color who are routinely targeted by police. We are glad that the Task Force has heard our community and is recommending that this practice be eliminated.

Without clear policies ensuring respect for gender identity and the rights of LG-BTQ people during police interactions and arrest processing, the people we serve experience danger and frequent violations of their constitutional rights while in police custody. Additionally, all too often members of our community are also denied HIV medicines and other critical medications while in custody. We look forward to working with the DOJ to establish model policies for local law enforcement to ensure that LGBT people and people living with HIV are treated with dignity and receive medically necessary treatment in police custody.

Finally, we welcome the Task Force's recommendations with respect to data collection on all detentions by local law enforcement agencies, and caution that law

cont on page 10...

★ **KUWASI BALAGOON AWARD** ★ This award is named after Kuwasi Balagoon. Kuwasi was a New Afrikan Anarchist and political prisoner. Kuwasi was a defendant in the Panther 21 case in the late sixties, and a member of the Black Liberation Army. Captured and convicted of various crimes against the State, he spent much of the 1970s in prison, escaping twice. After each escape, he went underground and resumed BLA activity.

He was captured in December 1981, charged with participating in an armoured truck expropriation in West Nyack, New York, on October 21 of that year, an action in which two police officers and a money courier were killed. Convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment, he died of AIDS-related illness, on December 13, 1986. While in prison Kuwasi and his co-defendent, David Gilbert, co-founded a peer support program to raise awareness during the early days of AIDS. When asked to comment on his comrade's sexuality, David Gilbert told Black and Pink, "Kuwasi was a free-spirited and loving human being who did not feel bound by the hetero/gender binary."

Nominees:

Comrade Malik is the Deputy Chairman of the prison chapter of the New Afrikan Black Panther Party. Comrade Malik is a strong advocate for prisoner liberation, a writer for many online and print publications, a contributor to Prison Radio, and so much more. In his own words, "Comrades, it's time that we truly realize that there is an attack on us and we cannot and must not fight each other. We have to unify; we have to work together and do something significant in order to abolish this imperialist system which is destroying so many. This is the deeper struggle! Dare to struggle, dare to win! All power to the people!"

Candace Africa is a Black transgender woman fighting and surviving in the Massachusetts Department of Corrections. Ms. Africa has been fighting for the rights of transgender prisoners for many years, fighting for her own needs while aligning with the struggle for all transgender women in the state. Even while spending years in solitary confinement, Ms. Africa has been resisting religious persecution (refusal by the prison to wear her head scarf) and fighting to get word out about the experiences of transgender prisoners.

Ashley Diamond currently incarcerated in Georgia and managed to sneak a cell phone into the prison to expose the sexual violence, physical assaults, and daily harassment she and other prisoners were facing in the Georgia prison. Ms. Diamond has been exposing the violence of the Georgia Department of Corrections and has fought her way through the courts to win some victories and partnering with the Southern Poverty Law Center has gotten the attention of the New York Times, who are finally printing stories about the experiences of Black transgender women in prison. Ms. Diamond was also recently recognized as one of the Trans 100 people to to know about in the United States

Dee Farmer is a foremother in the movement for prisoner justice. Dee Farmer is a jail house lawyer who fought her way through the US court system demanding access to gender affirming care. It was Dee Farmer's persistent court work that forced the US Supreme Court to create a standard for the treatment of prisoners in the US. Farmer v. Brennan is one of the most cited cases surrounding prisoner abuse, and Ms. Farmer fought that case on her own for many years before the ACLU joined in.

★ **OUT OF CONTROL AWARD** ★ This award is named after Out of Control: The Lesbian Committee to Support Political Prisoners. Out of Control (OOC) was a self-supporting committee formed in 1987 to organize resistance to the Lexington Control Unit for women. Through connections with other grassroots campaigns, churches and civil rights groups, the 10 women of OOC sought to expose the brutality of this federal penitentiary, culminating in a lawsuit and the closure of Lexington. For 10 years of active struggle the group aligned itself with 25 women political prisoners, provided support work for HIV positive prisoners, and battered women convicted of killing their abusers.

Nominees:

Laura Whitehorn is a white anti-imperialist former political prisoner. Whitehorn was active in the underground revolutionary movement against US racist policies across the world. Whitehorn directed AIDS education and wrote for numerous publications during her years behind bars. After being released from prison Whitehorn has continued being actively involved in HIV/AIDS organizing and other anti-racist organizing.

CeCe McDonald was incarcerated for defending herself against a racist, transphobic assault in July 2010. Supporters and activists in Minneapolis and across the US built up a solidarity campaign to demand her freedom, and she eventually succeeded in achieving a reduced sentence. After serving a 17-month term, she was released in January 2014. After her release, CeCe quickly became a leading an outspoken fighter in the movements for LGBTQ liberation, prison abolition, and racial justice. She is currently working on a forthcoming documentary with actress Laverne Cox on her case, entitled "Free CeCe."

Monica Jones is a trans activist and sex worker rights advocate who lives in Phoenix, AZ. She fights for the rights of sex workers around the globe, even testifying at the United Nations. Ms. Jones was targeted by an anti-sex work law in Phoenix while organizing with others against the criminalization of sex work.

TJ Parsell is a filmmaker, author, and human rights activist. He is dedicated to ending sexual violence in prison and to stopping the practice of sending juveniles to adult jails and prisons. His passion stems from his years in prison as a teenager and young adult. At 21 years old, he'd spent nearly a quarter of his life incarcerated. Parsell wrote about his experience in prison in the book Fish.

★ **MIKE RIEGLE AWARD** ★ This award is named after Mike Riegle, a journalist, gay liberationist and prisoner rights activist. Riegle became involved with the anarchist paper The Fag Rag and became part of the Gay Community News staff in 1979. Riegle expanded the newspaper's policy of providing free penpal ads to prisoners and began a program providing gays and lesbians behind bars with legal and health information. Riegle was an active advocate for prisoners and published on the subject extensively in GCN. He became a part of the Redbook Prison Book Program and advised the American Friends Service Committee and the AIDS Action Committee on the concerns of prisoners. Mike Riegle died on January 10, 1992 after a long struggle with AIDS.

Nominees:

Hearts on a Wire is a group of trans and gender variant people building a movement for gender self-determination, racial and economic justice, and an end to policing and imprisoning our communities. Hearts on a Wire are well known for their publication of the report "This is a Prison, Glitter is Not Allowed: Experiences of Trans and Gender Variant People in Pennsylvania's Prison System"

LGBT Books to Prisoners is a volunteer-run organization based in Madison, WI that sends books and other educational materials, free of charge, to LGBTQ-identified prisoners across the United States. They have been doing this for nearly 10 years and have sent books to close to 3500 prisoners.

Dean Spade is a white trans activist, writer and professor. In 2002 Dean founded the Sylvia Rivera Law Project, a non-profit law collective that provides free legal services to transgender, intersex, and gender non-conforming who are low income and/or people of color.

Nominees and Awards cont on Page 10...

A DECADE OF BLACK AND PINK AWARDS AND NOMINEES BALLOT

At the Decade of Black and Pink celebration in October we will be presenting awards to celebrate the work of many people. The Decade of Black and Pink planning committee came up with these awards and nominations. We would like YOU to vote and choose the winners! **PLEASE CIRCLE YOUR VOTES AND VOTE FOR ONE CANDIDATE FOR EACH AWARD.** Please mail the responses to:

Black and Pink - AWARDS
614 Columbia Rd.
Dorchester, MA 02125

KUWASI BALAGOON AWARD	OUT OF CONTROL AWARD	MIKE RIEGLE AWARD	NEWSPAPER SUBMISSION AWARD
★ Comrade Malik	★ Laura Whitehorn	★ Hearts on a Wire	★ Billy
★ Candace Africa	★ CeCe McDonald	★ LGBT Books to Prisoners	★ Ms. Jazzie
★ Ashley Diamond	★ Monica Jones	★ Dean Spade	★ Chris
★ Dee Farmer	★ TJ Parsell	★ Reina Gossett	★ Shayla
		★ Authors of Queer (In)justice	★ Adree
		★ Harry Vedder (Myrlin)	

...cont from page 9...

Reina Gossett is a activist, writer, and artist and the 2014-2016 Activist-In-Residence at Barnard College’s Center for Research on Women. As the membership director at the Sylvia Rivera Law Project from 2010 to 2014, Reina worked to lift the voice and power of trans and gender non conforming people. Prior to joining the Sylvia Rivera Law Project Reina worked at Queers for Economic Justice where she directed the Welfare Organizing Projected and produced A Fabulous Attitude, which documents low-income LGBT New Yorkers surviving inequality and thriving despite enormous obstacles.

Authors of QUEER (IN)JUSTICE. Joey Mogul, a partner at the People’s Law Office in Chicago and director of DePaul University’s Civil Rights Clinic; Andrea Ritchie, an attorney and organizer who works on issues of police misconduct; and Kay Whitlock, an organizer and writer around structural injustices. In Queer (In)Justice, Mogul, Ritchie, and Whitlock offer an alternative analysis of queer oppression, arguing that the criminalization of gender/sexuality is a tool used to enforce and maintain hierarchical power systems. By anchoring the discussion within this larger context, the authors center the experiences of queer low-income people and people of color and expose the institutionalized nature of homophobia.

Harry Vedder (Myrlin) was the editor for Brothers Behind Bars from 2002 - 2013. Brothers Behind Bars was a Project of the Radical Faeries that worked to connect Gay and Bisexual men and Transgender women prisoners to pen pals. Myrlin was a dedicated volunteer who gave hours of his life fighting for GBT prisoners and keeping attention on prisoners as the mainstream LGBT movement pushed forward other agendas.

★ **FIRST ANNUAL EXCEPTIONAL NEWSPAPER CONTRIBUTOR AWARD** ★

Billy, January 2014

Excerpt : “After spending 11 years in that box, still to this day, that box is with me. Imagine walking in each room you enter and counting everything, including the cracks on the wall. Even though I was in that room the day before, I would count it once again hoping for just one new small crack- why? It gave me the sense of change. I’ve been out now for 6 years. I still go nights without sleep. Those years stole things from my very soul. Now in the crowded day rooms, endless lines for my basic needs- food, medicine, etc. I pray for refuge to be alone. In lines sometimes my anxiety overcomes me and I have to give up my seizure meds, placing me at risk of further harm. I will cry for no damn reason at all. One of the scariest things, I know I’m not crazy, but I can’t get my head out of that cell. It’s gotten so hard lately to even call home, I think they know I’m damaged somehow. When I used to get visits there would be periods of silence because I had forgotten how to even hold a conversation with my family. They don’t visit anymore”

Ms. Jazzie, October 2014

Excerpt : “So I challenge my LGBTQ family that’s behind these wall, and in the free world, to dig deep within yourself to find the willpower to move forward no matter how hard it get. Instead of putting your sister down, pick her up. I truly believe that we can make a difference, but we must stick together. I want the girls to know that they are special and deserve to get treated no less than the queen she is. Walk with pride, purpose, and dignity. Brothers and & Sisters let’s work together so no one is abused physically & mentally. I want you to be happy and make sure the person you with makes you happy, and makes you feel like the woman or man you are. Don’t limit yourself and don’t mess up a good thing once you find it. Well, that’s all for now. So stay strong and keep your head up.
I love you. Your sister in the struggle 4 life,
Ms. Jazzie, California”

Chris, April 2014

Excerpt: “I’ve been beaten, violently sexually abused as a child, abandoned, caused great harm to others, vilified, faced execution, now with no hope of ever leaving prison sitting in a supermax cell in segregation. Why does it even matter, why should I bother growing? The answer is simple, I owe it to the people I’ve harmed, and to myself. I ask anyone who may be in a similar situation- Do you really want to die without creating any balance to all the wrong you’ve done?”

Shayla, February 2014

Excerpt : “If you are a free member of the Black & Pink family and there are people who will listen to you out there, please let our voices be heard in the proper forum with the proper people, we all need support, not just the gay and trans community, but everyone in here. If we are to become productive members of society, we have to actually be known as member of society.”

Adree, October 2014

Excerpt : “I will not stand around and watch another one of my family members of the LGBTQI community be harassed, hurt, or bullied for any reason regarding their sexual preference or identity. I vowed that after being abused while in prison because I am a transwoman, I will not stand and watch this hurt and disgust continue, so as long as I have a breath in my body!”

cont from page 8... enforcement agents should never be charged with collecting information on the actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity of individuals with whom they come into contact.

We therefore applaud the Task Force’s recommendations that information regarding sexual harassment and assault by police officers, as well as LGBTQ people’s experiences of policing, be captured through anonymous, voluntary and independent surveys such as the Bureau of Justice Statistics Police Public Contact Survey and the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey. We look forward to working with the Department of Justice in development of voluntary surveys for administration by local authorities to ensure that LGBTQ people’s experiences of policing are captured.

The opportunity for LGBT advocacy organizations to present recommendations to the President’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing has been critical, but without timely implementation of these recommendations, LGBTQ people and people living with HIV (PLWH), and particularly LGBTQ people and PLWH of color, will continue to experience discrimination and abuse at every level of the criminal justice system.

We look forward to continuing our work with our sister LGBT organizations, other civil rights groups, and the Obama Administration to make sure that these changes are implemented.

List of organizations:

- American Civil Liberties Union
- Lambda Legal
- National Black Justice Coalition
- National Center for Transgender Equality
- National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs
- National LGBTQ Task Force
- Streetwise and Safe (SAS)

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ANGELA DAVIS ON PALESTINE AND THE PRISON INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX (TRANSCRIPT)

Angela Davis: First of all, thank you for the wonderful welcome. And thank you Brenna for the great introduction. I see that I’m the professor this evening. And also thank you Rafeef and thank you Frank.

And thank you to everyone who came out this evening. This is an important meeting, in a sense, a major beginning. And I’m happy to see that so many people who are already involved in the campaign against G4S are present this evening as well. You inspire us to continue to work.

I was first asked to participate in this meeting, highlighting the importance of boycotting the transnational security corporation G4S. I could not have known that this meeting would coincide with the death and memorialization of Nelson Mandela. And as I reflect on the legacies of struggle we associate with Mandela, I cannot help but recall the struggles that helped to forge the victory of his freedom, and thus the arena on which South African apartheid was dismantled. [...]

So now we’re confronted with the task of assisting our sisters and brothers in Palestine, as they battle against Israeli apartheid. Their struggles have many similarities with those against South African apartheid. One of the most salient being the ideological condemnation of their freedom efforts under the rubrick of terrorism. And I understand that evidence is being made available that indicates that historical collaboration between the CIA — well, we knew the CIA collaborated with the South African apartheid regime — but it appears that it was a CIA agent who gave South African authorities the location of Nelson Mandela’s whereabouts in 1962, and that led directly to his capture and imprisonment.

And it wasn’t until the year 2008 — that’s like five years ago, right? — that his name was taken off of the “terrorist watch list.” When George W. Bush — maybe you remember him — signed a bill that finally removed him and other members of the ANC from the list ... in other words, when Mandela visited the US on several occasions after his release in 1990, he was still on the terrorist list, and there had to be — the requirement that he was banned from the US had to be expressly waived. [...] And as the US explicitly collaborated with the South African apartheid government, it supported and continues to support the Israeli occupation of Palestine, currently in the form of over \$8.5 million a day in military aid. The occupation would not be possible without the collaboration of the US government. And that is one of the messages we need to send to Barack Obama.

It is an honor to participate in this meeting, especially as one of the members of the International Political Prisoners’ Committee that was just recently formed in Cape Town, and also as a member of the jury of the Russell Tribunal on Palestine. And of course I’d like to thank War on Want for sponsoring this meeting. And SOAS, and particularly the progressive element here for making it possible for us to be here this evening. *cont on page 11...*

...cont from page 10... This evening’s gathering specifically focuses on the importance on expanding the BDS movement — the boycott, divestment and sanctions movement [...]While there are numerous trans-national corporations which have been identified as targets of the boycott — Veolia, for example, and I know you know Veolia pretty well here — there’s SodaStream, and and Ahava, and Caterpillar, and Boeing and Hewlett-Packard, and I could go on and on but I’ll stop there, and I will also say that G4S is especially important because it participates blatantly, directly, openly in the maintenance and reproduction of repressive apparatuses in Palestine. We’re talking about prisons and checkpoints and the apartheid wall.

G4S represents the growing insistence on what is called “security” under the neoliberal state. And of course Gina presented a critique of that notion of security by suggesting that feminist alternatives may be helpful as we attempt to re-conceptualize what security should mean. The ideologies of security represented by G4S bolster not only the privatization of security but the privatization of imprisonment, the privatization of warfare as well, the privatization of health care and the privatization of education.

G4S is responsible for the repressive treatment of political prisoners inside Israel, and through the organization Addameer, which is directed by Sahar Francis, who’s absolutely amazing, and some of you may have had the opportunity to hear her. But she travels all over the country and she and her organization, Addameer, provide us with information about what is happening both inside the prisons and outside.

We’ve learned about the terrifying universe of torture and imprisonment that is faced by so many Palestinians, but we’ve also learned about their spirit of resistance, we’ve learned about their hunger strikes and other forms of resistance that continue to take place behind the walls.

I think that Rafeef may have pointed out that G4S is the third-largest private corporation in the world. What is the first? What is the largest private corporation in the world? It’s Wal-Mart. And the number two is FoxConn, which produces devices like iPads, et cetera, et cetera. So I was looking at the website of G4S. It’s really interesting to look at their self-representation. And they point out all of the things they protect. And among all of the objects of their protection are rock stars and sports stars, and people and property. I’m reading directly from their website: “from insuring that travelers have a safe and pleasant experience at ports and airports around the world ... to secure detention and escorting of people who are not lawfully entitled to remain in a country.”

They tell you exactly what they’re doing. And again I’m quoting: “in more ways than you might realize ... G4S is securing your world.” And we might add: in more ways that we might realize, G4S has insinuated itself into our lives under the guise of security and the security state, from the ways that Palestinians experience political incarceration and torture to racist technologies of separation and apartheid, from the wall in Israel to prison-like schools and the wall along the US-Mexico border.

G4S-Israel has brought sophisticated technologies of control to HaSharon prison, which includes children among its detainees, and Dimona prison, which incarcerates women as well, but let’s look for a moment at the extent to which G4S is also involved in the what we might call the larger prison industrial complex. And I’m not referring to its involvement in prisons — it runs and owns and operates private prisons all over the world, and if I still have time later I’ll talk about that, but I’m actually talking about schools.

In the US, schools, particularly in poor communities, in poor communities of color, are so thoroughly entangled in this prison industrial complex that sometimes we have a hard time distinguishing between schools and jails. Schools look like jails, and they use the same technologies of detection and they use oftentimes the same law enforcement officials. We have elementary schools in the US whose halls are actually patrolled by armed officers.

And as a matter of fact, a recent trend has been to arm the teachers. Particularly by school districts that cannot afford G4S. So if they cannot afford private security, then they teach their teachers how to shoot and give them guns. I kid you not.

If you look at a website that is entitled “great schools,” and you look up a school in Florida that’s called the Central Pasco Girls’ Academy in Land-o-Lakes, Florida, you will only learn that it’s a small alternative public school. But if you look at the “facilities” page of the G4S website, you will discover this entry: Central Pasco Girls’ Academy serves moderate risk females aged 13-18 who have been assessed as needing intensive mental health services. And they go on to write about the way in which they use “gender-responsive services.” And that they address sexual abuse and substance abuse, et cetera.

Now, the reach of the prison industrial complex is far beyond the prison itself. And in that context, we might also think about other ways in which a firm like G4S is complicit with other aspects of Israel’s system of apartheid. And the fact that it provides equipment and services to the checkpoints. And it provides services that refer to part of the route of the illegal wall, and so forth and so on. And it’s interesting that we see G4S along the wall in Israel, but we also see

G4S providing transportation for deportees — and I’ll talk about the UK in a moment — but I’m referring now to the transportation services that are used to usher undocumented immigrants from the US to Mexico, thus colluding with the repressive immigration legislation and the practices inside the US.

But of course, it was here, in the UK, where one of the most egregious acts of repression took place in the course of the transportation of an undocumented person. The last time I was in London, which actually wasn’t that long ago, it was in October, and I had the opportunity to meet with Deborah Coles, who is a director at Inquest, and she told me about the case of Jimmy Mubenga, the inquest that happened last summer. And she explained how he had died, and this technique that was used by G4S employees to prevent his voice from being heard as he was being deported on a British Airways plane. And apparently he was handcuffed behind his back, he had his seatbelt on, and he was pushed by G4S people against the seat in front of him in what they called a “karaoke carpet,” that is to say he would have to sing into the carpet of the seat in front of him.

It’s incredible, isn’t it, that they have this term for this form — apparently it was not supposed to be legal, but they were using it anyway — and he was restrained in that way for something like 40 minutes, and no one intervened. And of course by the time there was an attempt to give him first aid, he was dead.

And I think this egregious treatment of undocumented immigrants from the US to the UK compels us to make connections with Palestinians who are transformed into immigrants, into undocumented immigrants, on their own land. On their own land. And companies like G4S provide the technical means of carrying out this process.

And then of course G4S is involved in the operation of prisons all over the world, including South Africa. And the Congress of South African Trade Unions, COSATU, recently spoke out against G4S which runs a correctional center in the free state. Apparently, the occasion was the firing of something like 300 members of the police union because they went on strike. And let me read a brief passage from the COSATU statement: “G4S’ modus operandi is indicative of two of the most worrying aspects of neoliberal capitalism and Israeli apartheid — the ideology of ‘security’ and the increasing privatization of what have been traditionally state-run sectors. Security in this context does not imply security for everyone. But rather, when one looks at the major clients of G4S security, banks, governments, corporations, et cetera, it becomes evident that when G4S says it is ‘securing your world,’ as the company’s slogan goes, it is referring to a world of exploitation, repression, occupation and racism.”

When I traveled to Palestine two years ago, and Gina pointed out that it was with a delegation of indigenous and women of color scholar-activists, it was actually the first trip, the first visit to Palestine for all of us. And most of us had been involved for many years in Palestine solidarity work. But we were all totally shocked by the blatant nature of the repression associated with settler-colonialism. The Israeli military made no attempt to conceal or even mitigate the character of the violence they were charged with inflicting on Palestinian people.

Gun-carrying military men and women were everywhere. And some of them looked like they were only 13 years old. I know, when you get older, they look younger. But these were really young people walking around with huge guns. It was — I experienced it as a kind of nightmare. How can this be possible? The wall, the concrete and the razor wire everywhere conveyed the impression that we were in prison. We were already in prison. And of course, as far as Palestinians were concerned, one mis-step and that person could be arrested and hauled off to prison. From an open-air prison to a closed prison.

G4S, it seems to me, represents these carceral trajectories that are so obvious in Palestine, but that increasingly characterize the profit-driven moves of transnational corporations associated with the rise of mass incarceration in the US and in the world.

In the US, there are some 2.5 million people in our country’s jails and prisons and military prisons, and jails in Indian country, and immigrant detention centers — on any given day, that is to say, there are 2.5 million people, approximately. It’s a daily census, so it doesn’t reflect the numbers of people who go through the system every week, or every month, or every year.

The majority of those people are people of color. The fastest-growing sector consists of women, women of color. Many prisoners are queer, and trans — as a matter of fact, trans people of color are the group most likely to be arrested and imprisoned. Racism provides the fuel for the maintenance, reproduction and expansion of the prison industrial complex. And so, if we say, as we do, abolish the prison industrial complex, we should also say abolish apartheid. And end the occupation of Palestine.

When we have, in the States, described the segregation in occupied

...cont from page 11...Palestine, that so clearly mirrors the historical apartheid of racism in the southern United States of America, especially when we talk about this to black people, the response is often “why hasn’t anyone told us about this before? Why hasn’t anyone told us about the signs in occupied Palestine? And about the segregated express auto-highways? Why hasn’t anyone told us this before?”

And so, just as we say “never again” with the respect to the fascism that produced the Holocaust, we should also say “never again” with respect to apartheid, in the southern US. But that means, first and foremost, that we will have to expand and deepen our solidarities with the people of Palestine. People of all genders and sexualities. People inside and outside prison walls. Inside and outside the apartheid wall. Boycott G4S, support BDS, and finally, Palestine will be free. Thank you.
From a discussion on Justice for Palestine and the Stop G4S campaign hosted by War on Want, the School of Law at SOAS and the Russell Tribunal on Palestine in 2013. Transcript published on The Electronic Intifida January 17, 2014

#SAYHERNAME: ACTIVISTS PUSH TO RECOGNIZE BLACK WOMEN VICTIMIZED BY POLICE VIOLENCE

Much of the debate surrounding police behavior in the United States has revolved around fatal confrontations between unarmed black men and law enforcement, but a new movement wants to remind Americans that black women are also victims.



Sherwin Bryce-Pease
@sherwiebp

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At vigil for black women killed at the hands of police in USA, msg that not just black men #sayhername #sabcnews

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Image of a Tweet

In order to do so, a new report was released Wednesday called ‘Say Her Name: Resisting Police Brutality Against Black Women,’ which documents cases in which black women have been killed, beaten or sexually assaulted by law enforcement. The report was authored by the African American Policy Forum (AAPF), the Center for Intersectionality

and Social Policy Studies at Columbia University, and Andrea Ritchie, a Soros Justice Fellow and expert on women’s experiences with police.

“Although Black women are routinely killed, raped and beaten by the police, their experiences are rarely foregrounded in popular understandings of police brutality,” said Kimberle Williams Crenshaw, Director of the African American Policy Forum and co-author of the report, in a statement. “Yet, inclusion of Black women’s experiences in social movements, media narratives and policy demands around policing and police brutality is critical to effectively combating racialized state violence for Black communities and other communities of color.” The group is using the hashtag #SayHerName to get its message out on social media.

On Wednesday, a vigil was held at New York City’s Union Square, where dozens of people rallied, and relatives of women victimized by police brutality spoke about their experiences. Meanwhile, a National Day of Action is planned for Thursday in numerous cities, including New York, Chicago, Detroit, Miami, and Seattle, organized by the Black Youth Project 100.

“All #BlackLivesMatter, and that means we uplift and fight for lasting justice for the families of victims of police violence,” the group stated on its website. “We’ve joined Ferguson Action and Black Lives Matter to put out a national call for actions to end state violence against All Black Women and Girls.”

Several black women have already been lost to police, according to the AAPF. In April, Alexia Christian of Atlanta was shot and killed by police inside of a patrol car. Authorities said she stole a truck and managed to free one of her hands from handcuffs before shooting at the officers inside the car, but relatives and activists question the story.

Another incident mentioned in the report concerns an Oxnard, California woman who was shot in March after local police responded to calls regarding a domestic dispute. A mother of three, 26-year-old Meagan Hockaday reportedly ran at responding officers with a knife before being shot. An investigation into the incident has been announced.

“Black women are all too often unseen in the national conversation about racial profiling, police brutality, and lethal force,” said Andrea Ritchie, who co-authored the report. “This report begins to shine a light on the ways that Black women are policed in ways that are similar to other members of our communities - whether it’s police killings, ‘stop and frisk,’ ‘broken windows policing,’ or the ‘war on drugs.’”

“It also pushes open the frame to include other forms and contexts of police violence - such as sexual assault by police, police abuse of pregnant women, profiling and abusive treatment of lesbian, bisexual, transgender and gender nonconforming Black women, and police brutality in the context of responses to violence - which bring Black women’s experiences into even sharper focus.”

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